

Proclamation 7139 of October 9, 1998**National Children’s Day, 1998**

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

One of the most important measures of our success as a Nation is the well-being of our children. As a society, we have no more important responsibility than to help our families raise healthy, happy, loving children in an environment that allows kids to reach their full potential. My Administration is committed to this goal, and we have made significant progress over the past five and a half years through initiatives and legislation designed to strengthen families, protect our children’s health, and invest in their education.

By providing a tax credit of \$500 per child to 26 million families, increasing the minimum wage, and cutting taxes through extending the Earned Income Tax Credit, we have helped millions of working families. We have dramatically increased Federal funding for child care and proposed additional subsidies and tax credits to help families pay for such care.

Through the Family and Medical Leave Act, we have made it easier for working parents to take as much as 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a new baby or a sick child without jeopardizing their jobs. And the landmark Adoption and Safe Families Act I signed into law last year helps the thousands of children in foster care by working to reunite them with their families, where possible, or move them more quickly into secure, permanent adoptive families when that is the best option.

To meet our commitment to the health of all our children, we have extended health care coverage to millions of previously uninsured children through the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the largest national investment in children’s health care in more than 30 years. Children with health insurance get a healthier start in life because they receive regular checkups and routine immunizations. We are working with the States to ensure that every child eligible for CHIP is enrolled, and we are focusing on enrolling the more than 4 million uninsured children who are currently eligible for health coverage under the Medicaid program.

To empower America’s children with the skills and knowledge they need to make the most of their lives, our Nation has also made the largest investment in education in more than a generation. Today, more than 800,000 children are enrolled in Head Start, receiving the attention and training they need to start school ready to learn. We are also working with the Congress to pass legislation that will provide public schools with more teachers, smaller class sizes, new or renovated buildings, and the latest in information technology.

Children are our greatest blessing, and raising them well is the most challenging and rewarding task any of us will ever undertake. On National Children’s Day, let us recommit ourselves—as loving parents and caring citizens—to ensure that all of America’s children grow up in truly nurturing environments where their needs are met and where they have every opportunity to make the most of their lives.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 11, 1998, as National Children's Day. I urge the American people to express their love and appreciation for children on this day and on every day throughout the year. I invite Federal officials, local governments, communities, and particularly all American families to join together in observing this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that honor our Nation's children. I also urge all Americans to reflect upon the importance of children to our families, the importance of strong families to our children, and the importance of each to America.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7140 of October 15, 1998

White Cane Safety Day, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The white cane is both a simple tool and a powerful symbol. For people who are blind or visually impaired, it can be the key to greater mobility, giving them information about their surroundings and allowing them to travel safely whether crossing the street or crossing the country. For those who are sighted, the white cane shows that blind or visually impaired people have the ability, the desire, and the right to participate in every aspect of our national life. It is also a reminder that, whether as pedestrians or drivers, we should respond with care and courtesy to people using a white cane. And for all of us, the white cane symbolizes the independence every citizen needs and deserves if he or she is to contribute fully to society.

Our annual observance of White Cane Safety Day gives us the opportunity not only to celebrate the accomplishments of those who use the white cane, but also to renew our commitment to removing those barriers, both physical and attitudinal, that prevent people with disabilities from reaching their full potential. Since passage of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Fair Housing Amendments Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Telecommunications Act, we have made great progress in our efforts to ensure that all people with disabilities enjoy equal access to employment opportunities, education, public accommodations, housing, transportation, telecommunications, emerging technologies, and other aspects of our society.

We still have a long way to go, however, before we achieve the full inclusion, empowerment, and independence of all Americans with disabilities. The public and private sectors must work in partnership to raise awareness of the rights protected by the ADA and other laws, as well as the responsibilities and obligations these laws mandate. It is crucial that we pursue